

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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8. A method for applying a decorative element to a window covering, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a searchable data compilation of decorative elements on a storage device;

displaying available decorative elements to a customer;

obtaining a selection from the user, the selection comprising at least one of the decorative elements contained in the data compilation;

displaying images of the selected decorative element applied to the window covering;

applying the selected decorative element to the window covering.

9. The method of Claim 8 wherein the selected decorative element is one of a color, an image, a pattern, and a texture.

10. The method of Claim 8 wherein the selected decorative element is applied to the window covering in a retail store.

11. The method of Claim 8, further including the step of scanning a sample.

12. The method of Claim 8, further including the step of accessing a file containing the searchable data compilation.

13. The method of Claim 8, further comprising the step of storing the searchable data compilation on a removable storage medium.

14. The method of Claim 13 wherein the removable storage medium is a CD-ROM.

15. The method of Claim 8 wherein the step of displaying images includes rendering at least one decorative material onto a computer model of the window covering.

16. A system for applying a decorative element to a window covering in a retail location, the system comprising:

a computer device configured to store and recall a decorative element data;

a printer coupled to the computer and configured to apply the selected decorative element to the window covering.

17. The system of Claim 16 further including a scanner configured to spectrophotometrically measure a color sample.

18. The system of Claim 16 further comprising:
window covering data to display images of the decorative element applied to the window covering;

means for user selection of a window covering sample;

program for mapping a selected decorative element onto appropriate portions of the image of the selected window covering sample whereby the user can appreciate how the selected decorative element might look on the window covering.

19. The system of Claim 16 wherein the computer is coupled to a network or an Internet server so that decorative element data from a remote location is searchable or recallable.

20. The system of Claim 16 further including a magazine configured to feed window covering elements to the printer.

21. The system of Claim 16 further including a curing apparatus configured to cure the decorative element.

22. The system of Claim 16 wherein the decorative element is one of a color, pattern, image, and texture.

23. A system for customizing a window covering, the system comprising:
a memory storage device configured to store and recall decorative element data files and textual information coordinated with the decorative element data files;

a display configured to display the decorative element data files in response to actions of a user to recreate a representative image of the decorative element sample;

an input device for accepting choices from the user;

a processor configured to implement data manipulation and operate the display, input device, and storage device;

rendering program for rendering decorative elements chosen by the user;

a printer configured to apply the selected decorative element to the window covering.

24. The system of Claim 23, wherein the decorative element is one of a color, image, pattern, and texture.

25. The system of Claim 23 further including a scanner configured to spectrophotometrically measure a color sample.

26. The system of Claim 25, wherein each color contains RGB values corresponding to the actual spectrophotometrically measured sample.

27. The system of Claim 23 further comprising:
window covering data to display images of the decorative element applied to the window covering on a monitor;
program for mapping a selected decorative element onto appropriate portions of the image of the selected window covering sample whereby the user can appreciate how the selected decorative element might look on the window covering.

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